

DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

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Priest admits he molested teen

■ By pleading guilty to a lesser charge, he avoids prison but must undergo counseling.

BY STAFF WRITER
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A Roman Catholic priest admitted yesterday that he molested a 16-year-old boy who was a former parishioner.

The Rev. William D. Lum pleaded guilty to third-degree sexual abuse, a misdemeanor. Lum admitted to touching the boy's genitals in 1992 at Our Lady of Mercy Church in Greece.

Lum, 54, was given a condi-

tional discharge instead of incarceration or probation.

For the next year, Lum must stay away from the victim, now 21, and children under 17, unless he has permission from their parents. He also must continue counseling.

If he violates those conditions, he could receive up to 90 days in jail.

Lum originally was charged with third-degree sodomy, a felony that could have sent him to prison for up

to four years. But the victim agreed that Lum could plead guilty to a lesser charge so that he wouldn't have to testify, prosecutors said.

As he sentenced Lum, Monroe County Court Judge Charles T. Maloy rejected a request by the victim to be allowed to speak.

The judge, who has discretion to decide whether a victim may speak at a sentencing for a misdemeanor conviction, said his docket was too full to allow the victim to be heard.

Afterward, the victim's lawyer, who is considering a civil lawsuit, reacted angrily.

"He (the victim) has been left with lifelong scars at the hands of this defendant," said John A. Aretakis. "It would have been cathartic for him to be able to speak."

In a statement he had intended to read aloud, the victim called the sentence "a slap on the wrist" and "an open invitation" to sexual abusers.

But Assistant District Attorney Alecia Ann Elston said the victim had consented to the sentence.

She said the sentence was appropriate because of the age of the allegations, the absence of previous charges against

Lum, and the victim's desire not to testify.

The victim and Aretakis, a Manhattan attorney who specializes in civil lawsuits against abusive clergy, were shadowed outside the courtroom by a camera crew from the television program *EXTRA*.

The crew interviewed the victim, without showing his face, for an intended segment on clergy charged with sexual abuse.

Lum was arrested in April after the victim told authorities that Lum sodomized him nearly five years earlier, in the

rectory of Our Lady of Mercy, 36 Armstrong Road.

Lum met the boy while he was an administrator at St. Joseph's Church in Penfield. The two kept in contact when Lum was assigned to Our Lady of Mercy.

Lum took leave from the church in July 1996. He is not a parish priest but is living in the rectory of a Rochester church. □

